

2Timothy 25-03-09a

We're here this morning at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It is the 9th of March, 2025. We're in the closing chapter of not only 2 Timothy, but also Paul's life of ministry and service as an apostle.

He is reviewing that life and expressing to Timothy his understanding of where he is in the plan and purpose of God. We are going to pick up now in verse 6 and following. We'll ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and begin.

Father, we're grateful for another opportunity to spend time together to reap the wonderful benefits that come from exposure to the truth of your word and in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the power and the effect that it has in and on our lives. We thank you for this passage and ask that as we look at it together, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each of our hearts, help us to see not only the meaning and purpose in the day in which it was written, but also its application in our own experience, that we can grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior, that we can reflect his glory, represent him adequately and effectively on this life, and be prepared ourselves for that day when the Lord Jesus will take us to himself and present us before your throne. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. As we look at this passage, and you'll remember that Paul is in a Roman prison. This is not the first Roman imprisonment where he's in sort of a house arrest situation and spends two years entertaining visitors and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

As you find at the close of Acts, this is far different. He is now imprisoned as an enemy of the state and is very close to the day of his execution. Church history tells us that he was beheaded in Rome not long after the writing of this letter.

So we saw his charge to Timothy in the first part of chapter 4, and in 2 Timothy chapter 6 it says, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

The words we have in English, I am already being poured out as a drink offering, this is a single word in Greek. You certainly have the word already, but the word is familiar sounding to us because it is the word spendomai, S-P-E-N-D-O-M-A-I, and our word to spend, to expend, to pour something out, to put something away from in the interest of something else to spend or to be spent comes from this spendomai. And that's the whole word, poured out as a drink offering, all of that as a drink offering is added.

In Greek this is just egogar, which is I, for, it's the post-positive idea here for gar. Gar is the word that's translated for or now, and it always comes second when it starts a sentence in Greek. So the first word in the sentence is ego, we get ego from this, and it means I myself.

Often in Greek you don't have to supply a preposition, not a preposition, a pronoun for a verb. You don't often have to specify the actor, the subject of a verb, because it is so clear in the verb's form itself. And so when he says I as the very first word in the sentence, it is emphatic, and the pronoun will be included for emphasis.

We would say I myself to make that same kind of emphasis. So for I myself, and then we have a day, which means already, spendomai, and that's it. And he's going to go on to talk about the time of his departure.

So egogar a day, spendomai, I myself am already being poured out, being spent, or I have already been spent, could be a colloquial translation as well. And the word spendomai is a passive voice. It's the idea he hasn't necessarily spent himself, he has been poured out.

And this is a view toward the plan and purpose of God. We are taken into circumstances that are of God's design. And we are not always in a situation that is a product of our choice.

Our choices are certainly involved. Paul had the opportunity to do like Jonah and go the other way when the Lord encountered him on the road to Damascus. But he willingly committed himself to ministry, to the Lord Jesus and everything that God asked of him.

And in the course of that life, he has spent or expended himself and he has been expended. I can't think of this concept without remembering in the artillery, the laborious process of going to the ammunition depot and obtaining cases and cases of artillery ammunition. This involves both the shell, the round itself, the brass shell in a 101A1, which is a 105 millimeter howitzer.

You have separate loading ammunition. So you have the shell that's going to go down range. You have the casing, which is going to hold the powder and you have the powder.

And the powder comes in bags and there are several of them. And so to determine how much force is going to be behind that particular shell when it's fired, you cut the charges. They are strung together and you use a combination of bags to do the charge four white bag or charge six, there's green bag and white bag.

And in those days that would be measured or determined by the people in the fire direction center. And then the gun crew will cut those charges, put those bags in the brass shell, the brass casing and that goes into the breach with the round on top. But when the exercise is completed or when your mission is accomplished, nobody wants to take ammunition back in a training environment.

You don't want to have to go check it back in and fill out all this paperwork. And so you expend what you have left, you pulled as much as you think you need for the training. And if you were a little bit light, didn't shoot quite as many missions, then you just have a wonderful free for all at the end and fire everything you have left.

And the official term for that is expend all remaining, whatever's left the mission is, here's your

target, here's the hillside, here's the piece of car wreckage that you're shooting at, expend all remaining. And that's what Paul has done. The ammunition is expended, Paul here is spent, he is poured out.

So this is a reference to how much commitment there is in Paul's spiritual life. There's nothing left. There's a song that says, put your all on the altar.

And that idea is embodied here in what Paul says. Why do we have this in scripture? It's a detail of Paul's life, but it is put here to remind us that our existence, even though it involves a lot of mundane daily details, is to spend ourselves in the worthiest of causes. You may remember that phrase in Theodore Roosevelt's oft quoted phraseology about being the man in the arena.

And he says that it is a wonderful thing to spend yourself in a worthy cause. But Paul doesn't say I have spent myself. He says, I am poured out.

And it is a recognition that just because you commit and just because you're heavily invested, just because you believe in a cause and you throw everything you have at it, that doesn't necessarily stack up at the judgment. Are we being spent by God because we are obedient, we are faithful, we are compliant, we ensure that we are meeting the conditions for the fulfillment of God's promises. And we know how to do this.

We know these basic spiritual skills to put ourselves in readiness so that God can invest us, can employ us, and can spend us in the accomplishment of his purposes. It has to be his purpose and not ours. His will and not ours.

And you think of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane praying to the Father. And at the point when his work is accomplished and he says, Tetelestai, it is finished, he has been fully expended in the center of God's plan and purpose for our salvation. And that word teleo is used in this next verse as well.

We talked about last time the time of his departure being at hand and how often in Scripture the season, kairos, is often translated season. It doesn't mean that Paul is looking at the sundial and saying, well, the time of my death is here. But he recognizes the season.

Jesus said farmers can look at the sky and see what the weather is going to do. Can you not observe the signs of the seasons? What is the season? And so the season of his departure is at hand. And this explains what we've looked at the last two weeks of his continued preparation and planning for the immediate future.

He's going to have a coat, Timothy's going to come and bring Mark, and so on. So the season of departure is at hand and Paul is making final preparations, his last push. He's sprinting toward the tape, if you will, in the race.

That brings us to verse 7, I have fought the good fight. This is a metaphor, of course, for life. And it is a look over the past.

He's not necessarily assessing his present situation. This is translated with the word kalon, K-A-L-O-N. Kalos is the word translated good or grand, something that is admirable.

It is noble. It is to be commended. It is to be appreciated.

And he puts the adjectives in front of the nouns. So if you look at the Greek text, it says the kalon agona agonizomai, the good agony I have agonized. And of course, looking at these with the perfect tense, perfect active indicative, I have done this.

I have agonized a good agony, the good agony. And agonizomai is used quite often for the struggle, the fight, if you will. You have 1 Timothy 1, verse 18.

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. His encouragement in the first letter was to do what he says he himself has done. He isn't asking Timothy to do anything that he himself is not familiar with and has invested in.

It's the same thing in 1 Timothy 6, 12. Fight the good fight of faith. Agonize the good agony of faith.

It's virtually the same phrase in 1 Timothy 6, 12. Then he says, I have finished my course. And in Greek, again, he puts the course first.

This is followed by the verb from teleo. Here it is teteleka. Remember the Lord Jesus said tetelestai.

It has been finished. When you see that doubled first consonant, teleo, teteleo, tetelestai, the doubling at the beginning, that's the mark of the perfect. And so the Lord Jesus says, it has been finished on the cross.

Here it is my race, my dromon, dromon, d-r-o-m-o-n, is the race, the course. I have finished, I have completed. Then he says the faith I have kept, teteleka.

This is from tereo. And again, the doubling of the T at the beginning, teteleo, teteleka, I have guarded. Tereo is to keep or guard, to treat as something valuable and to be preserved and protected.

So the faith I have protected, I have preserved, I have guarded. This isn't so much I have been obedient as I have countered attacks on the faith. I have defended the truth that constitutes the faith.

I have spoken against those who want to pervert it or to twist it or to claim that there is some other faith, some other truth. I have guarded it, I have preserved it. And this is a look over the course of his previous life up to the present.

And these three different areas dealing with the choice we make of whether to, as the great, I

always think in this regard of Shakespeare's soliloquy that he puts in Hamlet's mouth, to be or not to be, that is the question. Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take up arms against a sea of We face a choice when there is struggle, when there is resistance, when there is difficulty. What is our choice? We can give in, we can be carried about by every wind or we can stand firm, hold fast, plant our feet on the solid rock, claim God's grace in strengthening us.

If we wait on the Lord, He will strengthen us, He will help us, He will uphold us with the right hand of His righteousness, but it is a choice. And it is not just all of life in general, specific situations call for faith, call for patience, call for durability in claiming God's grace. All of us can think of situations we are in right now where we need to fight the good fight to continue.

And we get the word agony from this for a reason. It's hard, it can be painful, it can be challenging, it can make us want to quit and go a different direction. And so the good agony, there can be suffering that is of our own making, self-induced misery, it has been called.

And that's not a good agony, that's not a good fight. We can adopt a cause, we can pursue an objective, we can think that something seems right to us, and we spend ourselves in trying to bring that about. And it's not the good, it's not the kalon, K-A-L-O-N, fight.

We have to be sure that the fights we are fighting, the battles we are waging are in and for the Lord's work and the Lord's will. And this requires prayer, it requires humility, it requires in many cases the fellowship of other believers so that we can be more objective and be reminded that there can be more than one perspective, more than one view. So Paul says, I have fought the good fight.

And this is his part in choosing, in discerning, in ensuring that he is in the faith. He encourages others, examine yourselves and see if you are in the faith. You can't fight the good fight if you're not in the faith.

And if we're in the faith, we will be characterized, whatever the difficulty, by the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. And if we find ourselves in angst, if we find ourselves not having peace, not having joy, and at cross purposes, that's not fighting the good fight.

We may be fighting, but it's not the good fight. So Paul, time and again, and I'm sure he had failures, I think the dust up in previous days, whether it is John Mark leaving, whether it is going to Jerusalem and taking the vow and paying for the other men's sacrifices and so on. Paul isn't saying that he never made a mistake or went down a wrong road.

But the character of his life, the overall pattern of it, is that of dedication to struggling the good struggle, fighting the good fight. And I have finished the course. The course isn't designed by the runners.

They have race tracks that are cross country. They have different kinds of courses that are laid

out, whether it's a golf course, whether it's a bicycle race, an endurance race. But others will design it and figure out where are the hills, where are the rest areas, where does someone need to plan the expenditure of their energy so that they can finish the race in the best possible way.

And so Paul didn't design the course. God has designed the course. Paul has followed the course and he has finished it.

And to view our lives as having been designed by God for his glory and for our blessing, for our growth in many cases, for our learning, to teach us to put faith into practice, that is the course. And whatever the course is, whichever way it turns, if it's uphill, if it's downhill, if it goes through the valley of the shadow, if it takes us to beatific visions from hillsides and mountaintops, whatever the course is, to diligently finish it in the strength that the Lord provides. That's what Paul says he has done.

And all of these are perfect tenses. Then the faith I have preserved, I have guarded. You can see this both in Paul's own personal life and application and in his presentation and communication to others.

Those that are in a communication function have a responsibility to be sure that what they present, what they teach is the truth and reflects accurately God's Word, the inspired scriptural record that we have. But personally, and for each one of us, we keep the faith, we guard the truth by ensuring that we ourselves are walking in it and walking by it, in its power. That it is the light that shines on our path.

It is the lamp to our feet. And the importance of the Word of God, that is the faith. And if we begin to judge priorities and options by what seems best to our human eye, instead of measuring against the standard, the objective standard, the righteous and inspired standard of scripture, we are not going to be able to say, I have finished the course.

I have guarded the faith. We've guarded what we thought was best. And that in many cases will not comport with what scripture requires.

The more difficult way, the harder option is often the one that we are called to, because it then requires strength that comes from beyond ourselves. Anyone can do the easy thing. If we're going to do the hard things, they need to be done in God's strength, by God's grace and for God's glory, and not for any other reason.

Paul says he has done this. So then in verse 8, he says, finally, and then we have a present tense, there is reserved. He doesn't say it has been reserved.

It is reserved. Paul looks at what's coming up as a present reality. Finally, there is preserved to me the righteous Stefanos, the righteousness crown, Dikaiousnes Stefanos.

Dikaios, you're familiar with this. Righteousness. It's a righteousness crown.

This is what we accrue by our faith, our consistency, our endurance, our patience. But it's very important to note the word order in the rest of this verse. I'm translating this by sight directly from the Nestle-Allen 27th edition text.

And so in the Greek word order, finally, there is reserved to me the righteousness crown, comma, the to be given, this is apodidemi in a future tense, the one to be given to me. There is preserved for me, there is reserved for me, the righteousness crown, the one which will be given to me. You have to me here twice, once in each phrase.

It's reserved to me. It will be given to me by the Lord Jesus. Given to me the Lord Jesus.

It's actually the Lord, Hakureios. So the one the Lord gives to me. In English, you have to move the subject up.

The Lord will give to me in that day. The Lord will give to me in that day. Now, what do you not hear me reading from the Greek that you have in your English? The Lord, comma, the righteous judge.

That isn't the word order in Greek. There is reserved for me, the righteousness crown, the one which the Lord will give to me in that day. Then it says, the righteous judge.

Given to me in that day, the righteous judge. Do you see what Paul does here with this word order? In our English, the Lord is the righteous judge. You could say, I know that God judges righteously.

He's going to evaluate us fairly. The Lord, the righteous judge. But that's not Paul's thought.

Paul's thought is, the Lord is going to give me this crown that is reserved presently to me, for me, in that day. The day, comma, the righteous judge. What does that remind you of in our recent context? Well, look back at verse one of chapter four.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. The day of judgment, there will be righteous judgment. So Paul isn't looking at the end of his life as the point of reward.

It is going to be in that day. And there will be a righteous judgment of everyone. In other words, if you think about this just in semantic terms, our English attributes righteous judgment as a characteristic to the Lord.

The Lord is the righteous judge, and He's going to award something to me. But in Paul's thinking, the Lord is going to give this to me in that day. And Paul is viewing the day and seeing the righteous judge at work.

It is what the righteous judge is doing in that day that is in view. And he wants Timothy not to think about an innate or inherent quality of the Lord, being righteous and judging fairly, but to be thinking about the day where the righteous judge is going to be functioning and acting and

deciding. His evaluation will be final and his rewards and lack thereof will be evident in that day.

And this is how we can think about our lives. If we want to fight a good fight and run a good race, if we want to preserve faith in our own lives, the motivation is twofold. We can always think about the character of God.

He is so many things that Scripture reveals. But Paul says, think about time. Think about what is coming up.

There is a day coming when the Lord is going to judge the living and the dead. He's going to bring the kingdom and there will be opportunities or no opportunities in that kingdom based on the evaluation that he accomplishes in that day. So it's subtle, but it's important.

We can look ahead to the day of judgment and know that there is reward laid up for us, not rebuke, not loss, not a giant flash fire of wood, hay, and stubble, but there is actually reward, a crown of righteousness. What's that crown made of? Where does it come from? It is our agonizing, our struggling, a good struggle, struggling for the right reasons, for the right causes, in the right way, to complete whatever course God has mapped out for us, and to run it well and faithfully, and to guard and preserve the role of truth, the operation of our faith, because by faith we gain righteousness. This righteousness crown is based entirely on whether we do these things Paul has said characterize his own life.

He will give this crown not to me only, but also to all who have loved his epiphany, his epiphany. What fascinates me here, the last verb in the sentence is he will give this righteousness crown to me, and not to me only, but to all the ones having loved. It's a perfect, this is a perfect active participle, the ones having loved his appearing.

If his appearing is future, how can you have loved it in the past? It isn't those who will rejoice at his appearing, or those who will sing and shout at his appearing, or those who will celebrate his appearing, those having already loved his appearing. You can love a thing that you have not yet seen, that you have not yet experienced. That's what Paul is saying, and the motivation for our life needs to be that day.

What's going to happen on that day? This is a great motivation. It is a great rectifier if we are beginning to stray, or to tilt, or to slow down. Think about that day.

What will the evaluation be on that day? Remember little kids misbehaving, and their mother, this is in decades gone by, would say, wait till your father gets home. Well, if little kids begin to think about what will the evaluation be when dad gets home, it corrects behavior in the present. And how much better to be looking forward to your father coming, and wanting to be pleasing in his sight, and wanting to be approved, wanting to be enfolded and embraced and approved, changes what we do in the present.

The prospect of evaluation in the future is a powerful influence on our current thinking. It helps us to be objective. It helps us to remember who we are and why we're here.

If there were no coming evaluation, it was just the giant gospel train is going to take us all to glory, and we're going to be in the streets of gold and listen to the angels sing. There is very little by way of motivation, rebuke, and correction on our present path. It doesn't really matter what I do now, because everybody will be happy over there.

But that day, the evaluation on that day, those who have loved his appearing enough to change behavior and to analyze ourselves and our choices now, makes a huge difference. And it's emphasized in this sentence, and I hope that has come through here. We want to be of those who joined Paul in right now, days past, up to the present, and for whatever remains of our life, to be those who are loving his appearing, who have loved his appearing.

On that day, it will all be perfect tense. What did you do in the past? It isn't how much celebration and how much excitement is there when the Lord Jesus appears in the sky. Did you love his appearing before he came? That crown of righteousness will be given to those at the evaluation having loved his appearing, having looked forward to it and been guided by it and motivated by it.

So that brings us now to verse 9, and that's where we'll pick up after the break.